

**Maryland Lynching Truth & Reconciliation Commission  
Meeting #30**

**Date:** Monday, August 8, 2022

**Time:** 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 a.m.

**Attendance:**

David Armenti	X	Kirkland Hall	ABS	
Iris Barnes	X	Elizabeth Hughes	ABS	
Simone Barret	X	Tiesha Dupree Wilson	ABS	
(DeNeen Brown)	(ret)	Stephanie Suerth	X	
Charles Chavis	ABS	Carl SnowdenN	ABS	
Roger Davidson	ABS	Marshall Stevenson	X	
Maya Davis	X	Stephanie Thompson	ABS	
Omar Eaton-Martinez	X	Zenita Hurley	X	
David Fakunle	ABS	Kristine McFarlane	X	
Chris Haley	X	Will Schwarz	X	
Nicolas Creary	X	(Amina Ayodeji-Ogundiran)	X	
Izetta Mobley	ABS			

**Members of the public present:**

Annie Wood, Cheryl Mcleod, Amy Millin, Nick White, Diane Teichert, Kennedy Freeman, Jodie Geddes, Nick White, Brett M Tyler

**Call to Order:**

Commissioner Armenti called the meeting to order at 11:35am. Informed meeting that the Chair will be absent from the meeting.

**Approval of Minutes:**

The meeting minutes for July will be approved in the September meeting alongside the August minutes.

**Public Comments:**

Dr. Ayodeji-Ogundiran shared that the President of Bowie State University, Dr. Aminta Breaux in inviting the members of the commission to a private screening on September 9. She is asking for the email addresses, titles and names of commissioners so that she may send a personal invite to the virtual event.

**Committee Reports:**

**Logistics Committee**

Commissioner Davis shared that the logistics Committee met on July 18 at 1pm and their discussion centered on the upcoming Anne Arundel County’s public hearing of October 8. The proposed location for the hearing is City Hall. The Committee also discussed document updates to ensure that they are up to date with logistics and planning for the public hearing, as this would ensure consistency across the board.

She added that the committee also met with Stephanie Thompson who informed them that she will need assistance with some updated information. The logistics committee will therefore, need to update their folders so everyone can contribute to updating the needed information.

The logistics committee also discussed Somerset County hearing which will follow in November. Commissioner Marshal Stevenson was in attendance because he is the liaison for that group. He discussed some of the challenges they were having in terms of location. Trying to finalize on a location to make the hearing feasible on that day. The committee also addressed issues concerning Commissioners filling on of the agenda for when some other Commissioners are out. Commissioner Davis said she would be reaching out to all commissioners to see what their attendance will be in the hearings so she knows how to distribute properly the duties of the day. The committee meeting closed with discussing letters that would be going out to county officials. According to Dr. Davis, it is important for Commissioners to know the protocol persons for the county officials if they wish to invite them to hearings. This will help the committee prepare the necessary paperwork needed to invite those individuals.

Commissioner Armenti added that Commissioners should mark their calendar for hearing dates as there will be follow up conversation both internally and externally with coalition partners to make sure everything is accounted for . He further informed the meeting that he will not be available at the Anne Arundel county hearing but urged all commissioners to register their presence. He will be working with his committee to report on research and speaking roles.

Commissioner Chavis reiterated that commissioners will be required to attend all hearings. Commissioners would need to inform the Chair and Vice Chair in any event that they are unable to attend any of the hearings. The Chair and Vice Chair would have to approve any request to be absent at hearings.

### **Research Committee**

Commissioner Armenti reported that research has been focused on cases that are attached to upcoming hearings. For Anne Arundel, the committee has looked into the vital records of those available through the MD archives as well as the 1950 census which is helpful in tracking potential descendants as well as build the legacies of family members beyond the crimes that were committed.

A total of five victims are being investigated in Anne Arundel including King Johnson, George Briscoe, John Sims, Bright Smith and Henry Davis. The goal of the committee is to build out a genealogical profile to map out direct and collateral descendants who at minimum are been informed of the situation and are willing to talk with the Commission and provide insight.

Additional research is ongoing for several other cases including Garfield King, and Matthew Williams in Wicomico County.

Bret Tyler added that Commissioner Chavis provided some access on the Green family. He further informed the meeting that he will be leading a meeting with the family later in the day. Bret Tyler added that he is in the process of conducting an interview with the relative of Garfield King - Cynthia King Oak who is the second great grandniece of Garfield King.

Commissioner Armenti also informed the meeting that there is ongoing work on James Taylor in Kent County, there are potential connections with collateral descendants. In addition, Eleanor Thompson has generously shared information with the Commission regarding Ashbury Green as she is a collateral descendant.

He urged all Commissioners to continue to build on the profiles of cases that are available. The work is ongoing.

Commissioner Chavis posited that moving forward, the commission will be submitting a blanket for records within the state archive pertaining to the various Attorney General's judicial leaders that may be potentially connected with each of the cases that are being investigated. The commission wants to make sure to document the information that is coming in from the state archive and any other agency that the commission may be soliciting records from at the federal and state level.

### **Reconciliation meeting**

Commissioner Creary did not have a report for the reconciliation committee because he just assumed the chairmanship of the committee. He will reach out to the committee members to start having periodic meetings again especially as the Commission is gearing up for the upcoming hearings.

### **New Business**

There was no new business.

### **Announcements:**

- The Maryland Lynching Memorial Project annual conference is on Saturday Nov 12 at the Louis museum. One of the speakers will be Dr. Terry Anne Scott the author of the book Lynching and Leisure.
- Amy Millin - Can the commission send out a letter of acknowledgement to families who testified or shared their stories. This is to acknowledge the emotional burdens that such testimonies can cause the individuals. The commission should send this acknowledgement early enough so that family members can feel validated and recognized. This will be part of the healing process.

Commissioner Armenti charged the reconciliation committee to take Ms. Millin's suggestion on and continue to build the relationships.

Commissioner Creary said he will draft the letter if he can get the names and locations of family members.

Commissioner Chavis informed the meeting that a letter is already drafted and is under review. The commission will work swiftly to get them out.

- Question in the chart by Ms. Jodie Geddes: Are healing experts present in the hearings? Commissioner Armenti responded saying that the commission has an affiliation with a social work group and will be leaning on that. There are also some expertise within the commissioners as well. The social work professionals will be present at the hearings.

### **Meeting Adjourned:**

Meeting was adjourned at 12:17. Commissioner Suerth moved for the adjournment and was seconded by Commissioner Omar Martinez